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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/565,784	01/25/2006	Katsuhiro Kubota	060070	7550
23850 7590 06/09/2008 KRATZ, QUINTOS & HANSON, LLP 1420 K Street, N.W. Suite 400 WASHINGTON, DC 20005				
EXAMINER				
TA, THO DAC				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
2833				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/565,784

Applicant(s)

KUBOTA ET AL.

Examiner

Tho D. Ta

Art Unit

2833

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 March 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-9 and 11-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 2-8, 14 and 16-18 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/S506)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiina et al. (6,597,578) in view of Okabe et al. (6,375,517).

In regard to claim 9, Shiina et al. discloses a junction block comprising: an inner cover 17; and a power block and connector blocks 12, 13, 14 combined with the inner cover 17, wherein components such as circuit boards are disposed and connected within a space surrounded by the power block and the connector blocks, wherein the power block and the connector blocks form the outside of the junction block, wherein the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover 17 is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part 17b with a guide part 13c, 14c in a direction crossing the inner cover 17 at right angles.

However, Shiina et al. does not disclose the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part with a guide part in a direction crossing the horizontal plate of the inner cover at right angles.

Okabe et al. discloses the combination of the block 2 and the block 3 is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part 13 with a guide part 12 in a direction crossing the horizontal plane at right angles.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the engaging mechanism as disclosed by Okabe et al. in order to select the shape based on aesthetic/environmental requirements/preference that are driven by a desire to increase market share.

In regard to claims 11, 12, Shiina et al. discloses a junction block comprising: an inner cover 17; and a power block and connector blocks 12-14 combined with the inner cover 17, wherein components such as circuit boards are disposed and connected within a space surrounded by the power block and the connector blocks, the power block and the connector blocks form the outside of the junction block, the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part 17b with a guide part 13c, 14c in a direction crossing the inner cover at right angles, and one of the connector blocks is combined with the inner cover 17, while the other connector block is combined with the power block (see figures 1, 6A).

However, Shiina et al. does not disclose the combination of the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part with a guide part in a direction crossing the horizontal plate of the inner cover at right angles.

Okabe et al. discloses the combination of the block 2 and the block 3 is carried out by engaging a slide-engaging part 13 with a guide part 12 in a direction crossing the horizontal plane at right angles.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the engaging mechanism as disclosed by Okabe et al. in order to select the shape based on aesthetic/environmental requirements/preference that are driven by a desire to increase market share.

In regard to claim 12, Shiina et al. discloses the slide-engaging part (the sidewall of the block) of the connector block or the power block enters into a dead space (the recitation "dead space" is not clearly defined and is so broad that virtually any surfaces of the blocks when touching each other after the assembly of the junction block as shown in fig. 6A meets this limitation) in the power block or the connector block, respectively.

In regard to claim 13, Shiina et al. discloses the dead space is within a connector (see fig. 6A).

In regard to claim 15, Shiina et al. discloses engaging parts 17b for engaging the power block and the connector blocks with the inner cover 17 and a mount 17a on the inner cover 17, and such engaging is carried out in the vicinity of the mount of the inner cover 17.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 2-8, 14, 16-18 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 9, 11, 12, 13, 15 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tho D. Ta whose telephone number is (571) 272-2014. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00-5:30).

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paula A. Bradley can be reached on (571) 272-2800 ext 33. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Tdt
6/5/08

/Tho D. Ta/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2833